

The Ojai & Ventura



VIEW



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Vol. 2 • No. 2 • Issue 14 • Published in the Ojai & Ventura Gold Coast Region • **FREE** • May 2009

CONSCIOUS LIVING



FESTIVAL - MAY 31

• **MAYOR CHRISTY WEIR GOES VEGAS?**



Photo © 2009, Joel Anderson



Photo © 2009, Joel Anderson

What's Good About Ventura !!!
Kyle Hunt - Downtown

Debt Ridden Ventura City Council \$ Desperately Targets Seniors \$ With Selective Code Enforcement

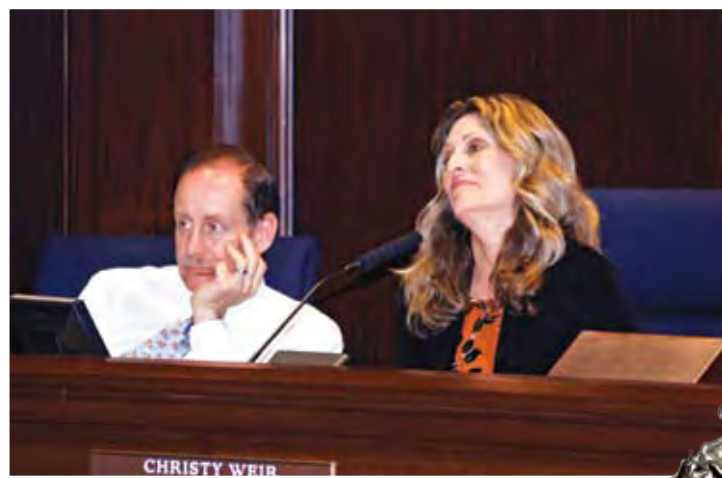


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City Manager Rick Cole & Mayor Christy Ponder their Options

After Losing \$10 Million in Risky-Get-Rich-Quick- 'High-Risk'-Bad-Investments 1 1/2 years ago, the City of Ventura in an attempt to Squeeze money out of Ventura Citizens, schemed a program in January of Selective Housing Code Enforcement, Targeting Fixed Income Seniors with the Threat of 'Pay up & Comply... or Else...'

- See Inside

**CRIMINAL
BAD BANKERS
BAD CREDITORS
& LUNATICS
SPECIAL
ELECTIONS**



G. Darryl Struth's, 29 Model A Sports Coupe

- **R. ELLIS SMITH**
- **PETER MILHADO**
- SOULFULNESS**
- **RICHARD SENATE**
- VENTURA TSUNAMI**
- **RON ROWE**
- **ALASDAIR COYNE**



KHOLI ROCKS !

Media Tyrants



HOE DOWN IN COW TOWN



- **DOC BARNES**
- INSURANCE**
- **HASSO**
- **ED TENNEN**
- **MARY LONG**



Teach the Children

Photo © 2009, Joel Anderson

Ojai Socialite Paula Spellman - Hotter Than Ever !

INSIDE: • **OJAI ACTIVISM** • **Politically Incorrect Crybabies** • **LOMAX II** • **Rockin'** • **K9**

'Proactive' Housing Code Enforcement Policy Targets Elderly at City Council Direction

Senior Ventura Citizens Square Off Against Ventura City Council



Camille Harris, www.vcord.org



The Rev



(L-R) Pete Cosenza, Phil Marquez, 94-years old, Rosanna Carlson (Marquez), Angelina Marquez (Phil's wife), and Barbara Marquez-O'Neill.

Phil is a WWII Veteran, was born in Oxnard and has lived in Ventura over fifty years. The City of Ventura Code Enforcement cited Phil for a "possibly substandard" housing condition, which could result in the fixed income resident receiving a bill from the city, upwards \$15,000 to 'comply.'

Ironically, June 14 2004, Phil was 'honored' as **Community Treasure-Ventura Oral Historian**, from Councilman Brian Brennan, (then Ventura Mayor), who deemed the date "**Phil Marquez Day**"!

It's All About Making Money



Andrew Stuffer, Chief Building Official & Sue Taylor, code enforcement official add things up.



City Manager Rick Cole, and Mayor Christy Weir



Barbara Marquez-O'Neill



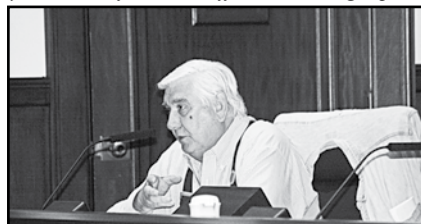
Shame, Shame -Pete Cosenza admonishes Building Official Stuffer



Ventura Senior, cited.



Ventura Senior Daniel Cormode, cited.



Councilman Neal Andrews



Councilmembers: Morehouse, Summers and Brennan

Despite Bad Economy City Goes Fundraising...

— by Camille Harris

The City Council in Ventura, under financial pressure, has now directed **Code Enforcement** to proactively target anyone and everyone where they can identify a code violation. This is an abrupt change from complaint-based enforcement in place since the very beginning of the department. This new policy affects owner-occupied homes, as in the case of **Les Goldberg**.

Mr. Goldberg is 90 years old, with cancer. In spite of his age and cancer, he takes in the homeless and distributes food four days a week to agencies that distribute food to the homeless and poor. Recipient of the **Jefferson Award** from **Jackie Kennedy**, he is known as "**Hero of the Homeless**" and is the author of **Living Judaism My Way**. Mr. Goldberg believes that what truly matters in life is what one can do for others.

Now he needs a good lawyer who has courage equal to his own. He is most angry that the money he is forced to pay the city will not go to help the homeless. He is angry because he knows that the majority of the

elderly will not be able to come up with the money to upgrade their homes to the city's satisfaction and may be put out themselves. Mr. Goldberg finds it ironic, that after having fought to save the homeless for over 40 years, he is now the victim of a policy which he says will create more homelessness.

One proactively cited person, **Susana Escobar**, has a disabled senior in her second unit, and she will be forced to put him out as she doesn't have the \$50,000 required to meet the city's demands. Her mortgage was granted upon having the modest income from the rental, so she may not even be able to keep up the payments and could lose her home.

Another senior, **Laura Swenson**, had to evict her low-income son from the safe second unit that was in place when she bought her property 16 years ago to support her retirement.

Another low income senior and nationally known artist, **Michael Pedizwiatr**, had to put out his low income renter and says he will have to sell his home and leave Ventura because he cannot financially meet the city's demands.

Approach to Reform: Unresponsive

Unfortunately, the city of Ventura has established a pattern of not responding until there is a lawsuit, as



Angelina Marquez



Mayor Christy Weir, and Councilmen Fulton & Monahan



Councilman Carl Morehouse makes a point.

in the case of the expensive failed 911 fee attempt, **Helen Yunker** (see story page 21) and the city's refusal to even count the signatures on the **VCORD View Petitions** by the legal deadline. In the name of compassion, however, a class action lawsuit may be called for when we see the most vulnerable of our population facing homelessness and financial ruin.

Without comprehensive code reform for the 21st century, the elderly will still be vulnerable to subjective police powers and a code that can be interpreted by whim.

Getting Grandma's House

Perhaps the city is planning an **Amnesty program**.

A member of the city's staff already wrote, "**Amnesty, then Be Nasty!**" The nasty part would be, once on the property, the city's demands tear down of additions or whatever else they can find, no matter that it is safe or not. This would bankrupt a senior on social security.

A member of the city Council said to the effect, "**We've got to get these old people out of their homes.**" The **City Manager, Rick Cole** justified his staffing increase for **Code Enforcement** as new "**revenue opportunities.**" Cloaked in the disguise of

Bad Codes, Continued Page 21...

U.S. Constitution - Bill of Rights 4th Amendment

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

"They made us many promises but they kept only one. They promised to take our land - and they did."
— Red Cloud, Oglala-Lakota c. 1822-1909

"We Believe code enforcement is on the right track...."
VCReporter Management, Editorial April 30

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BAD BUILDING CODES...

Bad Codes Continued from Page 5...

safety, could the real purpose be to reassess property taxes to a higher level from hardship sales of the homes of the elderly and low income residents? Fines and fees go to support the **Code Enforcement** department, but property taxes go to the **General Fund** to be spent at the whim of the **City Council**.

Challenges are Linked

There are two challenges that must be addressed to protect the poor and the elderly and both can be accomplished through Grandfathering with a private home safety inspection.

1. Legalizing second safe affordable units. This allows seniors to remain in their homes and the poor to have safe, affordable shelter while allowing the city to meet state affordable housing requirements. The reason this must be done by private, state and city licensed home safety inspectors brings us to the second challenge.

2. Grandfathering past improvements. **Ventura**, historically, has been a blue-collar town and people did their own maintenance and improvements. **Ventura** turned a blind eye and the pattern of **Don't Ask Don't Tell** was firmly established. The older properties have been continually improved since the town began and sometimes citizens needing to choose between fees to the city or going without, chose to put the money into their homes and improved their properties without permits.

Therefore, you can't do one without the other because seniors will not let the city onto their properties to inspect a second unit, knowing they will be cited for everything and anything that came before. An amnesty plan for second units wouldn't be successful *without grandfathering* for prior improvements.

What We Need

What we really need is a true **Citizens Committee** to recommend comprehensive code reform for the 21st century. **Ventura's** codes are onerous, subjective (what's "unsightly?") and are simply impossible for some of the older homes to meet.

Their proactive, rather than complaint-based, approach also lends itself to selective enforcement and will be used to quell dissent. I cannot begin to tell you how many are frightened to speak up, from the bottom to the top of the economic spectrum, no one is safe from subjective police powers.

Citizens need to know that they have the right to deny access to their properties under the **4th Amendment**. If you are a senior or low income person at risk of this policy or can help, please contact us at Camille@vcord.org or 805-648-1902

Camille Harris, VCORD
(Ventura Citizens for Responsible Development) www.vcord.org

Dear Mayor Weir & Councilman Andrews,

— **Michael Pedziwiatr**

I was present at the appeal board meeting of **David and Laura Swenson**. I feel your own 90 year old grandmother would not stand a chance against a bunch like these.

Two members were absent. Because of this the **Swensons** should be entitled to another appeal.

This was a stacked deck that no card shark in Vegas would dare bet against. I feel this is a sham. I will not abide to be judged by an unfair and biased group. I will somehow by whatever will and strength I have bring this to a higher authority.

Please do the right thing and enable your citizens with our proper rights.

The right to liberty, privacy and the pursuit of happiness. My right to be an artist is being

"Hope Springs Eternal"
City Council Meeting - May 4, 2009

by Helen Yunker

Yunker Continued from Page 3...

obligations to fix its landslide problem and to avoid at any cost setting a precedence for responsibility in possible future City-involved land issues.

And the cost has been very high - **\$506,000+** of the taxpayers' money to browbeat and victimize me to achieve its goal. Sadly, this outlay of cost has continued to rise over the past 11 years, inasmuch as the **City** had done nothing to abate the ongoing erosion which continues to eat away my lot and is now dangerously close to my foundation. In addition, the **City** has done an irresponsible and miserable job of monitoring and overseeing the development plan which committed its buyer (who purchased the lot in late 2004) to stabilize and develop the lot within 3 years from date of purchase. This contingency expired **Feb. 18, 2008**, with nothing having been done, and left the buyer in default, with the **City** now negotiating with the buyer in an effort to reach a new agreement. There is no way that the **City** wants to regain a liability position in this matter. I can't blame them for wanting to get off the "hot seat" no matter what it takes.

On **May 21st the Lot #7** matter is scheduled as a regular agenda item for discussion and possible disposition/resolution. It has taken over 11 years to get to this point. Just as it has always generated my high hopes over the years, whenever new people were elected to Council, that maybe someone

Photo © 2009, Joel Anderson



Dave and Macy

threatened. I was not informed that a warrant was needed to see my property. Why do they not inform you of this right?

I felt threatened and harassed by phone calls from the fire inspector.

This was why I let them in.

My property was not cited for safety code violations !!!

This type of power is unsafe and not just. The code enforcement department cannot be fair. In twelve years there have been no fires or problems on my property that indicate an unsafe environment. I live across the street from a fire department! I feel violated and trod upon. This is unfair.

Please abate this unfair problem that is causing me great stress and loss of sleep.

The members of the board really gave no thought or discussion regarding SAFETY.

The discussion focused on the permit that was not paid for 50 years ago.

Why should we be held accountable for this? Why should our personal property be taken away from us by our own government? Would you destroy a structurally sound cottage that you owned and know is safe? What purpose does this serve? Do you really wish to uproot a family that contributes to this city in a multitude of ways?

These are my feelings. I am hurt by your actions, **The City of Ventura, CA**, and those of the code enforcement inspectors.

My sister was a dispatcher for the **East Chicago Fire Dept.** for many years.

I became friends with her squad. I constructed an art piece in honor of the fallen firemen of

Photos © 2009, Joel Anderson



Eighty-seven year old Helen Yunker addresses an unresponsive city council.

would finally recognize the "selective persecution" treatment I have endured over the years on a problem I never caused, and that it was time to un-victimize me, and give me back my life. But this has never happened. To my knowledge the only solution the **City** is considering is to have the Buyer install a temporary berm at the top of the eroding slope, to give him time to find a new buyer and recoup his investment to date. The lot has actually been on the market since November, '08.

I am not anticipating recouping the \$1/4 million hard cash it has cost me. I can only entreat the **City** to come up with a reasonable and fair solution that will spare me the torture and frustration of dealing with a new buyer and the curse of Lot #7. At 87- 1/2 years of age, the very least I deserve (as do we all) is to enjoy the rewards of hard work and **Golden Rule** living - to enjoy my family, my many precious friends, and the love and respect from a grateful community for my ongoing efforts to enhance its quality of life, which I want to continue to do, whenever possible. Put yourselves in my shoes. Ask yourself --- would this situation have been tolerated, or even been allowed to exist had you owned this lot ?? Or your sister ? Or your mother ? Or your brother ? Or a friend ? Or anybody else ?? Then, why me ??? Why me ???

My fate and that of Lot #7 is scheduled to be heard, discussed and decided

nine eleven.

The action of this city's fire inspectors paints a stain upon and blemishes these realities/memories.

I wait to see the path you chose at the city council meeting this next Monday.

I expect your course of action to be the fair and correct one.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,
Michael Pedziwiatr

CITY ROAD TRIPS...

Continued From Page 2

and that's real close to **\$500,000**, plus the amount allocated for vehicle expense is somewhere around **\$300,000** it seems you have about 55 employees taking city owned (tax payer owned) vehicles home with them.

Rellis Smith
rellis39@sbcglobal.net
www.californiachile.com

"Meditation is the understanding of the totality of life in which every form of fragmentation has ceased. Meditation has no beginning and no end. In it, there's no achievement, no failure, no gathering, and no renunciation. It is a movement, without finality, and so beyond and above time and so beyond and above space. When there is that intelligence which is born of compassion and love, then all these problems will be solved simply, quietly."

— Jiddu Krishnamurti



Mayor Christy Weir appears to listen to Helen Yunker. Is she?



Helen walks away from her 84th City Council address.



City Attorney Ariel Calonne and City Manager Rick Cole.

Helen Yunker addresses a still complacent **Ventura City Council** at the May 4 meeting. Mayor Christy Weir and City Manager Rick Cole (top) made no comment. According to

sources, **City Attorney Ariel Calonne** (new to Ventura, Ventura politics, and his position as city attorney) was originally shocked at Helen's predicament, and attempted to resolve the matter, however was quickly read the 'ride act' by Mayor Weir.

Helen's case is scheduled to be heard May 21, 7:00 pm at Ventura City Hall.

at a **Special City Council Meeting** set for **May 21st at 7:00 pm**. I look forward to seeing you then.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Yunker

"Do not feel fear, allow the body and allow yourself to let go and understand that fear burdens the immune system and that's a proven fact. There is a branch of science called Psychoneuroimmunology at UCLA that has proven that your emotions lower your immune system, if they're negative and fearful."
— Dr. Theresa Dale, Ph.D., N.D.

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